

First Responders: Includes \$1 billion in FY 07 for new interoperability grants for first responders and a national alert system.

Physician Payments: Provides \$7.3 billion for physicians' update to protect doctors from receiving a scheduled 4.4 percent cut in their Medicare reimbursements.

If the fix was not passed, doctors payments, which were cut on January 1, 2006, will be 4.4 percent lower going forward.

LIHEAP: Additional \$1 billion in FY 07 for the LIHEAP program to help low income people pay for their heating bills this upcoming winter.

Child Welfare: Includes \$200 million in new money for the Safe & Stable Families program to help states provide preventive family preservation services and community-based family support services for families at risk and \$100 million to strengthen family courts overseeing child welfare cases.

New Higher Education Grants. Authorizes \$3.7 billion in new college grants for low-income, high-achieving students in the first and second years, and low-income, high-achieving students majoring in physical, life or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, and foreign languages critical to national security in the third and fourth years.

Elimination of Origination Fees. These are the costs lenders can charge for creating, processing and closing the loan. The package would gradually reduce borrower origination fees for both subsidized and unsubsidized student loans. Under current law, the origination fee for guaranteed loans is 3 percent. In the direct loan program, the origination fee is 3 percent (although in practice, the US Department generally charges 1.5 percent up front and another 1.5 percent if the borrower fails to make timely payments). The bill will gradually reduce the origination fee to 1 percent.

Elimination of "Single-Holder" Rule. Borrowers are allowed one consolidation of their loans, but currently they are restricted in shopping around to get the best consolidation deal. Eliminating this rule will allow borrowers to get the best deal possible.